

**Voice and influence of children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers:**

**October 2024 to March 2025**

**Top issues raised by children and young people**

**Wish 1: Mental Health support**

* Information about mental health support to be in alternative accessible and inclusive formats (SEND Youth Council).
* SEND specific mental health services for 18 to 25 year olds with SEND (SEND Youth Council).
* Importance of anonymity when contacting mental health services (Digital emotional wellbeing service consultation).
* Free and prompt mental health services (Digital emotional wellbeing service consultation).
* The preference for multiple access methods to service and different communication methods (Digital emotional wellbeing service consultation).

**Wish 2: Play**

* Fun accessible and inclusive activities and groups outside of school.
* More trips into the community whilst at school (Powerhouse and Pennyfield School).

**Wish 3: Voice and Influence**

* Importance of students having a platform in schools to have a voice and influence (Springwell Academy and West AIP secondary).

**Wish 4: Celebrating differences**

* More information in schools about bullying and discrimination linked to SEND, and what to do if you are being bullied.

**Wish 10: Learning settings that meet need**

* SEND training and support for school staff to enable them to meet the needs of students.

**Wish 12: Raising awareness of disabilities**

* Raising awareness of disabilities amongst peers and the city so young people are not judged.
* Professionals having knowledge of SEND services and where you can find the support you need i.e. finding a job, what your rights are, what services are available (Family Hubs consultation).

**Top issues raised by parents and carers**

[Issues raised](https://www.leedslocaloffer.org.uk/have-your-say/parents-and-carers/issues-tracker) by the Leeds Parent Carer Forum on behalf of their members and support groups in Leeds:

* Home to school transport.
* SEND information for families where English is a second language.
* Support for adoptive parents.
* Education Other Than at School.
* Education, Health and Care Plans.
* Extended school non-attendance.
* Hydrotherapy.
* Information about SEND services.
* Mental health support.
* Professionals’ knowledge of SEND.
* Sleep and melatonin support.
* Social care transitions.
* Waiting lists for diagnosis and support.

**Content**

Voice and influence of parents and carers

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Voice and influence of children and young people

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Voice and influence involving both parents, carers, children, and young people

* [Healthwatch and West Yorkshire Voice](#_Healthwatch_and_West)

**Purpose of the report**

* Collate voice and influence work from across the city to share with children and families’ strategic boards, councillors and partners.
* Champion good practice and shine a light on the valuable work services and organisations do.
* Raise awareness of the big issues being shared by the children, young people and families.
* Help services and organisations to link with colleagues and encourage them to work in partnership to reduce duplication.
* Help services and organisations to deliver ‘best practice’ voice and influence by reflecting on their work in line with the 5 O’s model.

**Voice and influence of parents and carers**

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| **Leeds Parent Carer Forum** | | | | |
| **Opening**  *Who consulted with* | **Opportunity**  *The way you consulted and what about* | **Obligation**  *Statutory / CFL Wish* | **Outcome** | **Ownership**  *Service / Partnership* |
| **Gathering the views of parents and carers of children with SEND**   * Members x 451 parent carers * Facebook group x 781 followers | The Leeds Parent Carer Forum provide opportunities for parents and carers to feedback their views and experiences about SEND Services.  Opportunities include:   * Parent carer support group network. * Annual Leeds Parent Carer conference. * Feedback via their website. * Visiting parent support groups. | SEND Code of Practice | All issues raised are logged on the [issues tracker](https://www.leedslocaloffer.org.uk/have-your-say/parents-and-carers/issues-tracker).  The top issues raised and shared with the Leeds Area SEND and AP Partnership Board are:   * SEND transport (home to school) * Social care transitions. * Support for adoptive parents. * Waiting lists for diagnosis and support. * Sleep and melatonin support. * Hydrotherapy. * Education Other Than at School (EOTAS). * Extended school non-attendance. * Education, Health and Care Plans. * Professionals’ knowledge of SEND. * Information about SEND services. * Mental health support. | Voice, Influence and Transparency Working Group which feeds into the Leeds Area SEND and AP Partnership Board. |
| **Developing information for families where English is a second language**  Leeds Parent Carer Forum | Families have fedback via different mechanisms that:   * Where English is a second language families struggle to access SEND services and information. * Families cannot always read written information and require it in a different format. | SEND code of practice | The Leeds Parent Carer Forum, SENDIASS and the Leeds Local Offer are working together to develop SEND information videos for families in different languages, the videos will be shared with schools and professionals who support families. | Leeds Parent Carer Forum  Leeds Local Offer  SENDIASS |
| **Home to school transport**  Leeds Parent Carer Forum  Parent Carer Support Group Network | Families have fedback via different mechanisms that:   * At the start new school academic year families have fedback issues with home to school transport i.e. transport not turning up, families not knowing what is happening etc. * Families have said transport feels at arm’s length to provision / school. Families want to receive information about home to school transport as soon as they are offered a place at a school. * Families have said there is a lack of flexibility with transport if a child is on shorter or longer days and is not available during transitions. * Not always a designated driver, can be a different driver every day. * Doesn’t cater for split families, and only pick up from one address. * Families are not aware of the process for cancelling transport etc. * Need a user-friendly transport application form. | Wish 6  SEND code of practice | The Voice, Influence and Transparency Working Group (subgroup of the Leeds Area SEND and AP Partnership Board) have worked with Children’s Transport and Passenger Transport to address the issues raised by parents and carers. All responses can be found on the [issues tracker.](https://www.leedslocaloffer.org.uk/have-your-say/parents-and-carers/issues-tracker)  Future plans include:   * The Leeds Parent Carer Forum and Voice, Influence and Change Team to review how user friendly the current information that is sent out to families on receipt of home to school transport. * Passenger transport are reviewing the information on the Leeds Local Offer website. * The Leeds Parent Carer Forum and Passenger Transport to explore how parent voice / experiences can be included within new driver training. | Voice, Influence and Transparency Working Group  Children’s Transport  Passenger Transport |
| **Health subgroup**  The Leeds Parent Carer Forum meet monthly with representatives from Leeds Community Healthcare and the ICB. | The Leeds Parent Carer Forum (LPCF) and Health colleagues from across the NHS organisations in Leeds meet on a monthly basis to feedback and discuss parental voice and views from across the City.  Health issue raised and discussed and services from across the health system invited to provide updates on their services | Wish 1 & 2 | **Neurodisability (ND)**  The feedback and shared lived experience will support future decision making through Health gaining further insight into the impact on SEND families. The Leeds Parent Carer Forum have been involved with the early stages of developing a Pre-School ND pathway in Leeds. Health colleagues have also shared with us draft correspondence to parent carers to get our input before wider circulation.    **Occupational Therapy (OT)**  Correspondence has now been issued to parents and carers to update them and provided valuable signposting to resources.  **Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)**  All resources are being reviewed and will be available on the Leeds Local Offer website.  **Avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID)**  A survey has been developed and shared with parents and carers to gather their feedback and further explore the support families need. | Designated Clinical Officer |
| **SEND Clinical Lead and SEND Health Coordinator Interview panel**  Representative from the Leeds Parent Carer Forum  March 2025 | The Leeds Parent Carer Forum sat on the interview panel for the recruitment of the SEND Clinical Lead and SEND Health Coordinator’s. | Wish 12 | The parent / carer’s insight and expertise were invaluable throughout the interviews and brought an important perspective to the panel.  Successfully appointed to all three posts. | Designated Clinical Officer |

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| **Early Help, Leeds City Council** | | | | |
| **Opening**  *Who consulted with* | **Opportunity**  *The way you consulted and what about* | **Obligation**  *Statutory / CFL Wish* | **Outcome** | **Ownership**  *Service / Partnership* |
| **User testing the early help website**  14 parents and carers  March 2025 | Colleagues from IDS used their contacts to consult with a number of parents/ carers around the early help website developments.   They were each awarded a £20 voucher for their time.  Prior to this, we held a focus group with four of the Our Voices representatives, some of whom had children with SEND. | CFL wish 1, 2, 7,8, 9 & 12 | Parents carers were able to initially inform the development of the website and then wider testing took place with parents/ carers using the test site.  Feedback was positive about the information contained within the website and parents/ carers felt that the site was user friendly and a good starting point for us to build on. | Early Help, Leeds City Council |

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| **SEND Commissioning Team, Leeds City Council** | | | | |
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| **Targeted Plus and Specialist Short Breaks offer**  78 parents and carers  January / February 2025 | An online survey was shared with parents and carers as part of the comprehensive review of the Targeted Plus and Specialist Short Breaks offer. | CFL wish 2 & 12  SEND Code of Practice | The Commissioning Team analysed your feedback and now carefully assessing areas where expectations are met and those where improvements are  needed. Working in coproduction means valuing the voices and feedback of parents, carers, children and young people which will inform future arrangements aimed at best meeting your needs. Future updates on the Short Breaks review will be made available in due course. | SEND Commissioning Team, Leeds City Council |

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| **SEND Transformation Team** | | | | |
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| **Development of an online Education, Health and Care assessment request form**  Leeds Parent Carer Forum.  Parent carer support groups.  October 2024 | The Parent Carer EHC needs assessment form was tested (User Acceptance Testing) by various teams including parent carers and external groups. Feedback was collected from these participants, followed by review meetings with key stakeholders.  What were the key findings:  Detailed feedback from various teams highlighted areas for improvement and provided valuable insights into the form's usability. | Wish 3, 10 & 12  SEND code of practice | The importance of including diverse parent carer perspectives and the need for thorough testing with relevant groups were emphasised.  The form was refined based on the feedback received, leading to improved usability and better alignment with parent carer needs.  The new forms are available on the [Education, health and care needs assessments and plans](https://www.leeds.gov.uk/schools-and-education/support-for-pupils-with-send/support-with-learning/education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans) webpage. | Children and Families Transformation Team |

**Voice and influence of children and young people**

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| **Voice, Influence and Change Team** | | | | |
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| **Leeds SEND Youth Council**  There are 14 members of the SEND Youth Council, who are aged 11 to 25 years old. | The SEND Youth Council meet monthly to work on campaigns and take part in consultations to improve SEND services in Leeds.  The SEND Youth Council have used data from Make Your Mark, My Health My School survey and previous consultations to choose their next campaign. | CFL wish 1 | The SEND Youth Council have chosen Mental Health support as their campaign, and are working with MindMate on:   * Reviewing the ND Hub. * Accessible and inclusive mental health information. * Mental health support for 18- to 25-year-olds. | Voice, Influence and Change Team |
| **Leeds Area SEND and AP Partnership Board Takeover**  40 young people   * Broomfield South SILC * West SILC * Powerhouse, West SILC * Priesthorpe * East SILC Post 16 * Temple Moor * Green Meadows Academy   12th November 2025 | Young people joined members of the Leeds Area SEND and AP Partnership Board for the 2025 takeover event and spoke to them about the issues young people have raised. | CFL wish 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9 & 12. | All feedback was shared with the Leeds Area SEND and AP Partnership Board were added to the [young people’s issues tracker](https://www.leedslocaloffer.org.uk/have-your-say/children-and-young-people/issues-tracker), and are being explored and actioned by the Voice, Influence and Transparency Working Group. All issues were also shared with the relevant Child Friendly Leeds wish leads.  **Key messages for decision makers:**  Top issues for children and young people are:   * Fun activities outside of school. * Disability awareness. * SEND training and support for professionals. * Mental Health support. * Bullying and discrimination. | Leeds Area SEND and AP Partnership Board  Child Friendly Leeds wish leads |
| **SEND Youth Summit**  47 young people   * Broomfield South SILC * Cardinal Heenan * Green Meadows Academy * John Jamieson, East SILC * Lighthouse Futures Trust * Lighthouse School * Oulton Academy * Springwell Academy East * West SILC   12th February 2025 | The SEND Summit is an information and consultation event for students with SEND.  Students who attended the event took part in the following consultations:   * What is working well / not working well in Leeds. * Family Hubs and SEND Coordinators. * Youth Activity Fund. | CFL wish 2, 3, 9 & 12  SEND Code of Practice | What is working well / not working well – all feedback was shared with the Leeds Area SEND and AP Partnership Board as part of the children and [young people’s issues tracker](https://www.leedslocaloffer.org.uk/have-your-say/children-and-young-people/issues-tracker), and with the Child Friendly Leeds wish leads.  Youth Activity Fund – feedback was shared with community committees when choosing activities to be funded in their local areas.  Family Hubs and SEND Coordinators – feedback being implemented and shared with SEND Coordinators  **Key messages for decision makers:**  Top issues for children and young people are:   * Fun activities outside of school. * Disability awareness. * SEND training and support for professionals. * Mental Health support. * Bullying and discrimination. | Event delivered by the Voice, Influence and Change Team and feedback shared with relevant services. |

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| **Learning provisions** | | | | |
| **Opening**  *Who consulted with* | **Opportunity**  *The way you consulted and what about* | **Obligation**  *Statutory / CFL Wish* | **Outcome** | **Ownership**  *Service / Partnership* |
| **Powerhouse, West SILC**  9 young people  February 2025 | A representative from the Powerhouse sits on the West SILC school council. The school council meets once a month.  Students at the Powerhouse are encouraged to provide their feedback and views about the provision at the Powerhouse via group discussions or contacting individual members of staff. | CFL wish 3, 9 & 10 | **Issue raised: lunches**  Students at the Powerhouse are given lunch options and are involved in preparing and serving the lunches to their peers.  **Issues raised: time in the community and to exercise**  Students at the Powerhouse spend time out in the community on work placements. Students are fully involved in deciding what their work placement will be.  Students have a dedicated afternoon to undertake exercise away from the Powerhouse. Students are asked what activities they would like to undertake, the activities with the most votes are then undertaken. | Powerhouse, West SILC |
| **Pennyfield School**  7 young people  Once a half term | The school council meets every half term, with representatives from each class. Each pupil gives feedback from their class. | CFL wish 6 & 7 | Following feedback from the school council:   * Virtual reality headsets have been bought for the school. * Classes will be visiting the local park. * One class went ice skating for a school trip. * A number of events have been planned.   **Key messages for decision makers:**   * Pupils want more access to fun activities and events in school. | Pennyfield School |
| **Springwell Academy Leeds**  30 students  Once or twice a half term. | Student Council meetings are held with representatives from each class to discuss key issues that have been raised by pupils in their class. Student council reps have had the opportunity to discuss their ideas directly with school leaders. | Wish 3, 4, 5 & 10 | The student council has provided pupils with a platform to have their voices heard within school by ensuring a continual dialogue between students and staff/leaders. It has given some pupils the opportunity to be a representative and spokesperson for their class. | Springwell Academy Leeds |
| **Springwell Academy Leeds**  350 students  Weekly | To supplement the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural curriculum, all classes engage in a weekly assembly which covers a whole range of topics including current nationwide/global issues.  Each week, pupils have the opportunity to vote in relation to that week’s vote topic. Their votes are forwarded on to relevant organisations to have their voices heard - these organisations will often then feedback their response in the following weeks. | Wish 3, 4, 5 & 10 | Votes for Schools provides all pupils with a platform to, firstly, engage with key areas of the SMSC curriculum, but also have their opinions and voices heard on a nationwide scale. Some classes have even experienced their opinions being used and discussed in subsequent assembly resources. | Springwell Academy Leeds |
| **West AIP (secondary)**  Individual students | Pupil voice at the West AIP (West 11 and West 14) is about individualisation support for the individual student.  Conversations take place with individual students as they start West AIP, midway through their time at the provision and as they leave the provision. | Wish 3 & 10 | Based on student feedback the following changes at West AIP have been made:   * Changes in lunchtime meals as pupils stated they didn’t enjoy them. At West 11 pupils vote for their favourite dishes to have in the week. * At West 14 pupils wanted a rotation of meals so they had consistent dinners each week. This has now happened and communicated on a weekly menu. * Pupils requested increased visits from their roll school. Frequency of visits is discussed with the home school during initial and review meetings. * Pupil passport evolved so pupils needs and strategies can be implemented at their roll school once transition is undertaken | West AIP (secondary) |

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| **Health** | | | | |
| **Opening**  *Who consulted with* | **Opportunity**  *The way you consulted and what about* | **Obligation**  *Statutory / CFL Wish* | **Outcome** | **Ownership**  *Service / Partnership* |
| **Digital emotional wellbeing support service**  107 young people completed the survey from West Yorkshire, 47 of these young people were from Leeds  November 2024 | An online survey aimed at children and young people who live in Kirklees, Calderdale, Leeds, Wakefield and Bradford and Craven who have used a digital platform to help with their emotional wellbeing, to help understand what they need from a digital emotional wellbeing support service. | Wish 1 | The findings from the survey will used to inform the requirements of our future digital emotional wellbeing support service.  **Key messages for decision makers:**  The findings showed what young people think are important from a digital emotional wellbeing support survey:   * The importance of anonymity. * The need for free and prompt services. * The preference for multiple access methods and communication via text. | NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board |

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| **SEND Transformation Team** | | | | |
| **Opening**  *Who consulted with* | **Opportunity**  *The way you consulted and what about* | **Obligation**  *Statutory / CFL Wish* | **Outcome** | **Ownership**  *Service / Partnership* |
| **Development of an online Education, Health and Care assessment request form**  6 members of the SEND Youth Council.  September 2024 | 6 members of the SEND Youth Council took part in a consultation session to gain feedback from the group around all aspects of the new online EHC needs assessment form. | Wish 3  SEND code of practice | Key feedback captured around the wording and length of the form, as well as the likelihood of the group using the form themselves.  Issues were raised around the length and accessibility of the form, which was fed back to IDS colleagues to amend.  Amendments to the form was made ahead of launch, based on the initial feedback from the SEND Youth Council.  The launch was delayed in order to make the amendments.  The new forms are available on the [Education, health and care needs assessments and plans](https://www.leeds.gov.uk/schools-and-education/support-for-pupils-with-send/support-with-learning/education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans) webpage. | Children and Families Transformation Team |

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| **Family Hubs, Leeds City Council** | | | | |
| **Opening**  *Who consulted with* | **Opening**  *Who consulted with* | **Opening**  *Who consulted with* | **Opening**  *Who consulted with* | **Opening**  *Who consulted with* |
| **Family Hub and SEND Coordinators**  47 young people  12th February 2025 | A consultation session at the SEND Summit 2025 to gather young people’s feedback about what they want from the new Family Hubs and SEND Coordinators. | Wish 3 & 12 | All feedback from young people will be shared with the new SEND Coordinators, and a plan will be put in place to make sure this is how they are helping children, young people and families. The full consultation report can be [found here](https://www.leedslocaloffer.org.uk/have-your-say/children-and-young-people/consultation-feedback).  **Key messages for decision makers**  Young people fedback they wanted the SEND coordinators to:   * Help parents and carers get the right support. * Help you to go to school or colleague. * Help you to find a job. * Help schools and colleges. * Help everyone who works with children to understand SEND. * Tell you about fun activities that are going on in Leeds. * Tell you what your rights are. * Help you to meet new friends. * Help you to say what you think and what you want to happen. * Help you to be independent | Family Hubs, Leeds City Council |

**Voice and influence involving both parents, carers, children and young people**

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| **Healthwatch and West Yorkshire Voice** | | | | |
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| **Children and young people’s experience of health and care services**  71 young people, parents, carers and professionals across West Yorkshire.  September 2024 | A survey was shared via West Yorkshire Voice and across local Healthwatch networks. This was aimed at children and young people, parents/carers of children and young people and professionals.  The survey asked what works well for children and young people in healthcare services, what improvements can be made, what worries people about their health and managing their health, and for suggestions on what would work better for children, young people and communities. The survey also focussed on Asthma and Mental health; to capture more specific feedback in these areas. | Wish 9  SEND code of practice | A [briefing paper](https://www.wypartnership.co.uk/application/files/1717/2648/5103/06b._Focus_on_Healthcare_Inequalities_-_Healthwatch_Report.pdf) was written based on the feedback heard from people. This was presented to the West Yorkshire ICB board.  **Key messages for decision makers**  Themes identified from the survey/feedback:  Asthma   * Regular health checks should be provided for all children and young people, including medication reviews. * Medication should be available to all as required- this should be easy and free to access, and advice given on how/when to administer this. * Information, education and signposting should be delivered into communities to build confidence in families to manage conditions like Asthma. This should include causes, symptoms and prevention. * All children and young people in West Yorkshire should be provided with good quality housing that is warm, without damp and mould.   Mental health   * Care should be centred around the needs of each individual and should take account of every aspect of people’s lives. Children, young people and their families should be fully involved in their care. * Children and young people should be treated with kindness and compassion and given a safe space to talk and be listened to. There is a key link between compassionate care and CYP and family’s confidence and trust in services. * Work needs to be done to cut waiting times and provide more timely access to much needed services.   Communication   * Communication should be simple and clear. * Information should be provided in a format that meets the CYP and parent/carer’s needs. * Good communication can greatly improve the outcomes of CYP and minimises some of the potential harm caused by lengthy waits for treatment. * Communication should involve the child or young person, where this is not possible or appropriate, services should work to involve the CYP as much as possible in their own care.   Access   * Timely access to early interventions and ongoing support where needed should be prioritised. * It is important that CYP are given the tools and education to be to access services independently, for example, booking appointments. * The additional challenges faced by those at risk of the greatest health inequalities and their needs and preferences should be recognised and supported by all services.   Cost of keeping well   * Free memberships at local gyms and leisure centres should be provided for children and young people who cannot afford to access these. * An increased provision of youth activities should be provided at no, or low, cost in safe community spaces. These should be accessible to all. * Additional support should be provided to families who cannot otherwise access healthy food, and information shared on the benefits of a healthy diet where needed. * Additional support should be provided, where possible, for travel to appointments where needed.   Healthy living   * Every child in West Yorkshire should have access to healthy food and education on how to maintain a healthy diet. * Access to outdoor and green spaces should be improved for all CYP in West Yorkshire- these should be safe and easily accessible places that encourage activity and exercise.   Healthy communities   * Service should work to have greater cultural competence, awareness and understanding of neurodivergence, gender variance and the barriers faced by people from marginalised communities. * Services should work more closely with education providers to provide consistent support to CYP and families. Relevant training should be provided to schools to help support CYP with individual needs. | West Yorkshire ICB Board. |